

State Historic Sites Open for Summer

By Kylie Blanchard, Clearwater Communications

North Dakota's travelers and visitors are exploring the rich history, special events and programming at the state's historic sites this summer. They are open for the summer season through September 15. Members of the State Historical Society of North Dakota Foundation receive free admission to all state historic sites and membership information is available at www.statehistoricalfoundation.com or by calling 701-222-1966. Here are the details on four of North Dakota's state historic sites:

Ronald Reagan Minuteman Missile State Historic Site

Opened only a year, the Ronald Reagan Minuteman Missile site has already welcomed nearly 5,000 visitors. "We've had visitors from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and a number of foreign countries," says Mark Sundlov, site supervisor. "This summer we anticipate 10,000 visitors."



The site, near Cooperstown, was part of the Grand Fork's Air Force Base's 321st Missile Wing and controlled 10 nuclear missiles. It served

as the Oscar-Zero Missile Alert Facility and November-33 Launch Control Center from 1966 to 1997.

Owned and managed by the State Historical Society of North Dakota, visitors get an inside look at the secret life of those serving the United States during the Cold War years. "When guests visit, they'll tour the topside living facilities and then take an elevator 60 feet below ground to the launch facilities," says Sundlov. "These missile sites are a big part of North Dakota culture, but have always been secretive up until last summer. Now people can actually see what was going on during the Cold War in North Dakota."

Recently named the 2010 North Dakota Tourism Attraction of the Year, the site's summer hours are 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Admission costs are \$10 for adults, \$3 for ages six to 15, and free for youth five and under. Special admission rates are available for groups and bus tours. For additional information call 701-797-3691 or visit www.history.nd.gov.

Fort Totten State Historic Site

Fort Totten's rich history began in the mid-1800s. Constructed as a military fort, it served as a post from 1867 to 1890. In 1891 it became the Indian Industrial School and from 1940 through 1959 the site operated as a community school.

"The minute you step into the site, it's like stepping back in history," says Jessie Reinke, site administrator and program coordinator.

It includes 17 original buildings and is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission costs are \$4 for adults, \$1.50 for ages

six to 15 and free for youth under five. School group rates with appointment are \$1 per student and bus tour rates are \$40 for up to 20 people.

Reinke says season passes are also available. "You learn so much about everything that is out here, you can learn something new everyday," says Reinke. For additional information call 701-766-4441 or visit www.history.nd.gov.



Pembina State Museum

The Pembina State Museum opened in 1997 with two exhibit galleries and a breathtaking view of the Pembina Gorge. "The museum tells the story of northeast North Dakota starting with the dinosaur ages to the present," says Jeff Blanchard, site supervisor. "Our main attraction is our seven-story high observation deck where you can see into Canada and Minnesota."

The region around Pembina has been an activity hub for



centuries and was home to several groups of American Indians. The area also played an important role in the state's fur

trade business. The museum's permanent exhibit gallery shows the region's history and the temporary exhibit gallery highlights specific topics in the state's history. "This area has 100 million years of history and it is fascinating to see everything that has happened here," says Blanchard.

The museum is open year-round with summer hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and Sundays 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. It also serves as a visitor information center. There is no charge to visit the museum and admission to the observation deck is \$2 for adults, \$.50 for ages 13 to 18, and free for youth under 13. The site hosts holiday events throughout the year and programming related to the temporary exhibit throughout the summer. The museum is now featuring the State Historical Society's traveling exhibit "Lincoln's Legacy in North Dakota," commemorating the bicentennial birthday of the 16th President.

For additional information call 701-825-6840 or visit www.history.nd.gov.

Fort Abercrombie State Historic Site and Interpretive Center

In 1858, Fort Abercrombie was the first permanent United States military fort located in present-day North Dakota. The fort was active for 20 years protecting wagon trains moving west, acting as peacekeepers between area American Indian tribes, and monitoring transportation on the Red River. "Fort Abercrombie has a lot of history and had a significant impact on westward expansion," says James Acker, site supervisor.

When the fort closed in 1878, all buildings and goods were sold at public auction. The only original building that remains today is the guard house, which was later moved back on site. It became the second state park in 1905 and was named a state historic site in the 1960s.

The site is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors can explore the historic grounds at no cost and admission to the site's museum is \$7 for adults, \$3 for ages 6 to 15, and free for youth under five.

Summer programs including a quilt club meeting held the second Saturday of each month and dutch oven cooking classes held the last Saturday of each month. The fort also hosts an old fashioned Fourth of July observance with living history demonstrations and childrens' games. For additional information call 701-553-8513 or visit www.history.nd.gov.



HISTORY ON CALL

These state historic sites and more are just a phone call away with the *History on Call* program. A partnership between the State Historical Society and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, *History on Call* explores the state's historic sites, parks and attractions through short pre-recorded narratives.

History on Call users dial 701-557-9190 and follow the prompts to enter the designated keypad numbers or "stop numbers" assigned to each site. Callers receive a brief history of the site and its location, the site's hours of operation, and an overview of what is found at the site. Enter #47 to visit the Ronald Reagan Minuteman Missile site, #43 to visit Fort Totten, #31 to visit the Pembina State Museum, and #44 to visit Fort Abercrombie.

The program includes 34 "stops" under the categories of First People, Settlement Era, Fur Trade Era, Military, and Wildlife Viewing, Camping, Hiking, and Biking. Standard land line and cellular phone rates apply.



The State Historical Society of North Dakota preserves and interprets treasures past and present, and works to share them with residents and visitors through a variety of services. For more information about the state's history agency and its programs, call 701-328-2666 or visit www.history.nd.gov.